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Encl. No. 1Desp. No. 123From Paramaribo**GOUVERNEUR VAN SURINAME****Paramaribo, 16th March 1954.****Cabinet****Nr. 303/-****Subject: Undefined boundaries of Surinam.****Enclosures: 2**

Referring to your letter of November 9, 1953, the reply of which much to my regret, has been delayed, I have the Honor to state the following.

(1) The boundary of French Guiana and Surinam.

This boundary is formed by the course of the River Marowynne. The reach between the mouth of this river and Stoelmanns Island (which lies at the junction of the rivers Lawa and Tapanahony) is regulated by the 1915 Convention between The Netherlands and France (Official Gazette (Staatsblad) 1916 Nr.304), in which it has been laid down that from the sea to the Island of Portal (at approximately 40 kilometres from the mouth of the river) the boundary will be formed by the "thalweg", and from the island of Portal to Stoelmanns Island it will be formed by the middle of the river. Upon request of both parties the question, whether, upstream from Stoelmanns Island, the Tapanahony or the Lawa would be considered as the upper course of the Marowynne, was arbitrated by the Czar of Russia in 1891, which led to the decision that the Lawa would be considered as the boundary river. The only part of the boundary not settled by any binding agreement is the most southward part beginning at the bifurcation of the Lawa into the River Litani and the Marowynne Creek. Extensive negotiations have been held about the stretch of land between these two rivers, during which both sides, by historic and geographic argumentations, have respectively tried to point out that (for France) the Litani, and (for The Netherlands) the Marowynne Creek should be considered as the boundary river. These negotiations in 1939 ultimately led to a draft-treaty, upon whose contents (with the exception of a few details) the parties both agreed. The Netherlands in this draft agreement relinquished their standpoint as regards the Marowynne Creek, and the Litani subsequently was marked as the boundary river. But for the war of 1940 this draft treaty would in all probability have been signed and concluded. The Netherlands took the initiative to try to bring this matter to a conclusion, but the French Government, in 1949, stated that they would not be in a position to proceed before their records would have been put in order and various documents been found. Since then nothing in this respect has been heard from the French Government, and

To  
the Consul of the United States  
of America,  
Paramaribo.

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consequently the triangle formed by the River Litani, the Marowynne Creek and the Brazilian frontier (as regulated in the treaty of 1906 and in the supplementary treaty of 1938) formally still has to be regarded as disputed territory. The Netherlands Government, however, has so often agreed (lastly in the draft-treaty of 1939) with the fact that the River Litani should be considered as the boundary river, that the parties in practice may be considered as being in accord.

### (2) The boundary of Surinam and British Guiana.

Circumstances here are in many ways similar to those on the French side. Here too lengthy discussions were held, in the second half of the 19th and during the first decades of the 20th century, in order to endeavor to come to the defining of this boundary. And here too the parties soon agreed upon the lower reaches of the Corantijn. In deviation of the usual practice in international law, the British Government agreed to Netherlands sovereignty over the whole width of the river. But, also similarly, dispute arose about the upper reaches, i.e. about the fact whether the Kutari (British standpoint) or the New River (Netherlands standpoint) should be regarded as the continuation of the Corantijn. From a geographical viewpoint The Netherlands seemed to be in a strong position. The Kutari (also called Coeroeni (Curuni)), based on the findings of that expedition, had been considered as the boundary river since 1843 when the German explorer Schomburgk in the service of the British explored the hinterland of British Guiana. The expedition went southwards around the New River and, in following the Coeroeni downstream, did not even hit upon the New River. However, later explorations proved the existence of the New River whose water volume exceeds that of the Coeroeni by 75 per cent, from which it may be reasonably assumed that this river must be considered as the upper course of the Corantijn.

The British Government, for historical reasons, was not willing to relinquish their rights on the territory situated between the two rivers. The Netherlands Government ultimately acquiesced in this standpoint. Paragraph one of the draft-treaty, concluded by both parties in 1939, states:

(3) The river named by Schomburgk the River Kutari shall be considered to constitute the upper reaches of the River Courantyne, and the boundary shall follow the left bank of the principal course of the Kutari."

As was the case with the French, here too the second World War interfered with the signing of this agreement. After the War, when the Interim Orders of Surinam required that Surinam should be heard, it was due to certain objections of the Territorial Government against considering the Kutari as the upper reaches of the Corantijn that the treaty could not be concluded. Although the Interim Orders do not

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exclude the possibility of doing so, the Netherlands Government for political reasons, is reluctant to conclude a binding international settlement with Great Britain which, on this subject, would be in direct opposition to the viewpoint held by the Territorial Government. As long as the Territorial Government have not changed their standpoint, or have not found another solution, the triangle formed by the New River, the River Kutari and the Brazilian frontier therefore should formally be regarded as disputed territory.

I hope the foregoing contains enough particulars to enable you to inform the State Department according to its needs. For your orientation I am enclosing two copies of a map of Surinam, on which the disputed territories are marked in red. I regret that it is impossible to submit copies of documents of recent date dealing with the borders of Surinam, since none at this moment have been released for publication.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Respectfully yours,  
for the Governor of Surinam, a.i.

was signed

Dr. C. Nagtegaal

(Director of the Cabinet of the)  
Governor of Surinam

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SECURITY INFORMATION

SURINAM  
Consulate: Paramaribo

In an effort to ascertain the present status of the boundaries in Surinam, we would appreciate any information in the possession of the embassy in regard to the following specific segment of the border:

- 1) Surinam - French Guiana boundary.

The area (approximately 02°00' - 04°00' N, 54°00' W) is shown as "undefined" on the enclosed map, scale: 1:17,500,000. <sup>55° W.</sup>

It is suggested that an official statement from an appropriate agency of the Surinam Government be obtained regarding their interpretation of the present status of the above-mentioned segment of the boundary. A possible source to be contacted for an accurate presentation of the boundary, including information of official demarcation maps, is the Centraal Bureau Luchtkaartering. Copies of recent border documents, textual materials, and official publications, if available, would be of considerable value.

(The enclosed map, Latin America: Status of Boundaries / First printed 1946, revised July, 1947/ shows the areas in question.)